

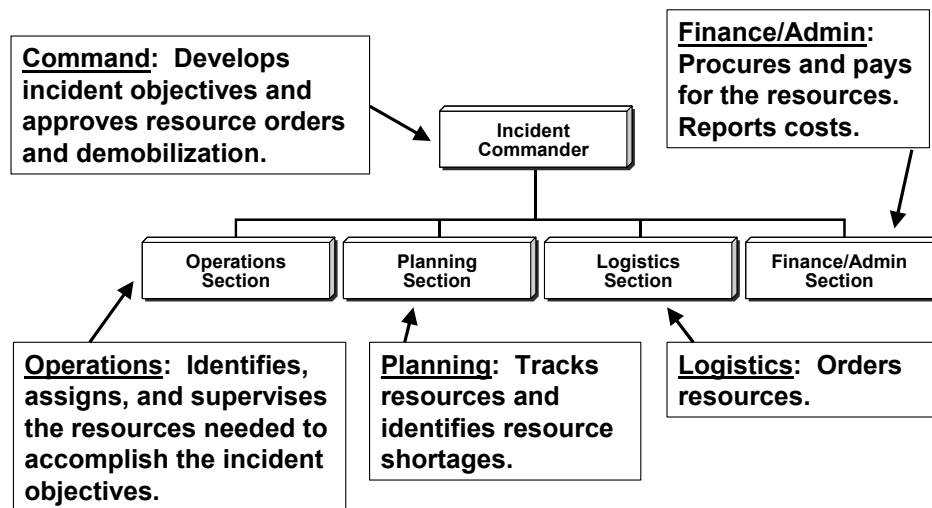
It was recognized early in the development of the ICS that the critical factor of adequate planning for incident operations was often overlooked or not given enough emphasis. This resulted in poor use of resources, inappropriate strategies and tactics, safety problems, higher incident costs, and lower effectiveness.

Those involved in the original ICS development felt that there was a need to develop a simple but thorough process for planning that could be utilized for both smaller, short-term incidents and events, and for longer, more complex incident planning. The planning process may begin with the scheduling of a planned event, the identification of a credible threat, or the initial response to an actual or impending event. The process continues with the implementation of the formalized steps and staffing required to develop a written Incident Action Plan (IAP).

The primary phases of the planning process are essentially the same for the Incident Commander who develops the initial plan, for the Incident Commander and Operations Section Chief revising the initial plan for extended operations, and for the incident management team developing a formal IAP, each following a similar process. During the initial stages of incident management, planners must develop a simple plan that can be communicated through concise oral briefings. Frequently, this plan must be developed very quickly and with incomplete situation information. As the incident management effort evolves over time, additional lead time, staff, information systems, and technologies enable more detailed planning and cataloging of events and “lessons learned.”

Planning involves:

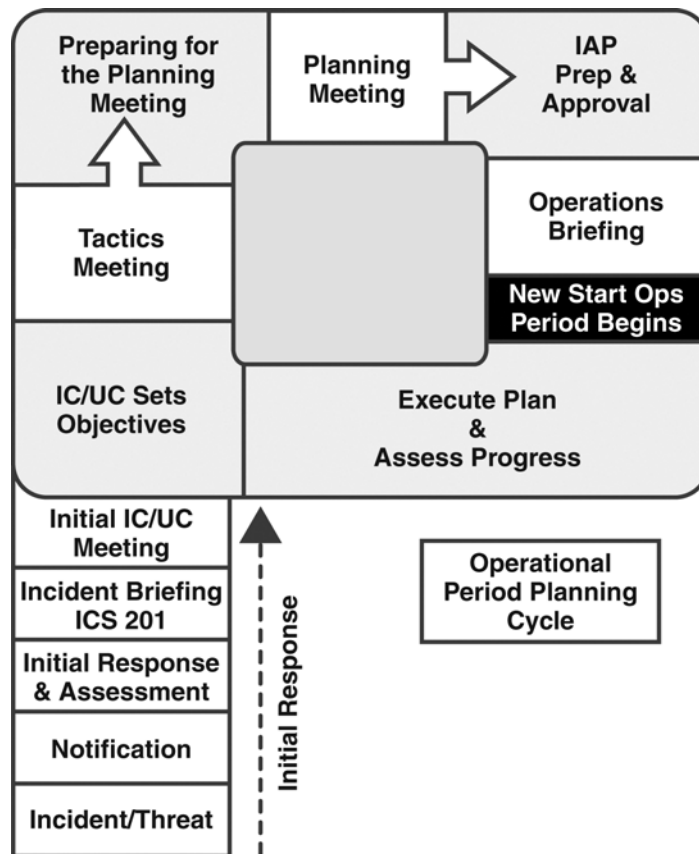
- Evaluating the situation.
- Developing incident objectives.
- Selecting a strategy.
- Deciding which resources should be used to achieve the objectives in the safest, most efficient and cost-effective manner.



Caption: Organizational chart showing that Command develops the objectives and approves resource orders and demobilization. Operations identifies, assigns, and supervises the resources needed to accomplish the incident objectives. Planning tracks resources and identifies shortages. Logistics orders resources, and Finance/Administration procures and pays for the resources.

## The Planning “P”

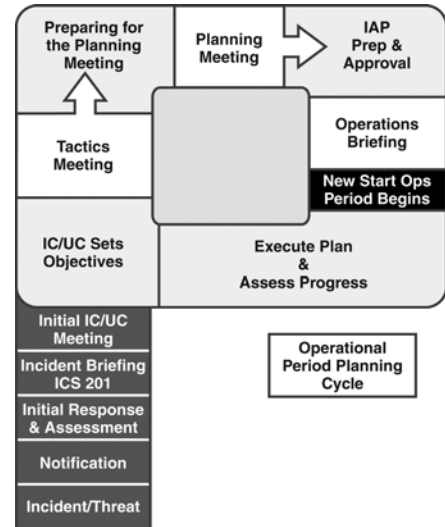
The Planning “P” shows the planning process for one operational period.



## Initial Response

Planning begins with a thorough size-up that provides information needed to make initial management decisions.

The ICS 201 provides Command Staff with information about the incident situation and the resources allocated to the incident. This form serves as a permanent record of the initial response to the incident and can be used for transfer of command.



## Set Incident Objectives

Determining the Incident Objectives and strategy is an essential prerequisite to developing the plan. Incident Objectives should have the following characteristics:

- **Specific** - Is the wording precise and unambiguous?
- **Measurable** - How will achievements be measured?
- **Action-Oriented** - Is an action verb used to describe expected accomplishments?
- **Realistic** - Is the outcome achievable with given available resources?
- **Time Sensitive** - What is the timeframe? (If applicable.)

The strategy or strategies to achieve the objectives should pass the following criteria test:

- Make good sense (feasible, practical, and suitable).
- Be within acceptable safety norms.
- Be cost effective.
- Be consistent with sound environmental practices.
- Meet political considerations.

It is also essential to consider alternative strategies that may be employed. If possible, an alternative strategy should be considered for each Incident Objective.

On small incidents, the task of developing Incident Objectives and strategies is the sole responsibility of the Incident Commander. The activity associated with these first two steps may take only a few minutes.

On larger incidents, members of the General Staff and others will contribute to this process.

## Tactics Meeting

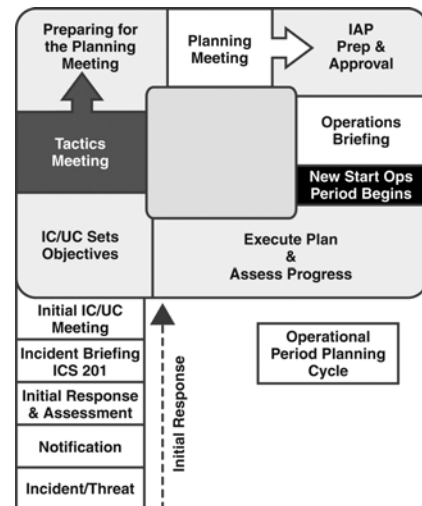
The purpose of the Tactics Meeting is to review the tactics developed by the Operations Section Chief. This includes the following:

- Determine how the selected strategy will be accomplished in order to achieve the incident objectives.
- Assign resources to implement the tactics.
- Identify methods for monitoring tactics and resources to determine if adjustments are required (e.g., different tactics, different resources, or new strategy).

The Operations Section Chief, Safety Officer, Logistics Section Chief, and Resources Unit Leader attend the Tactics Meeting. The Operations Section Chief leads the Tactics Meeting.

The ICS 215, Operational Planning Worksheet, is used to document the Tactics Meeting.

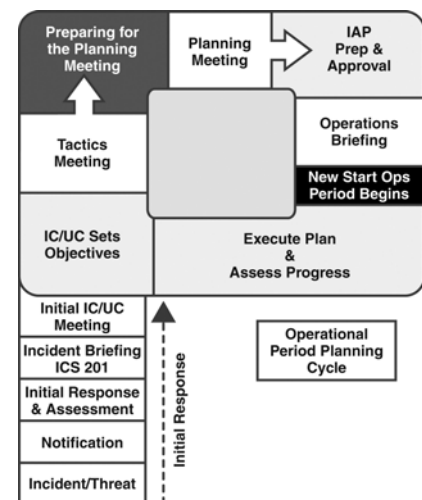
Resource assignments will be made for each of the specific work tasks. Resource assignments will consist of the kind, type, and numbers of resources available and needed to achieve the tactical operations desired for the operational period. If the required tactical resources will not be available, then an adjustment should be made to the tactics and operations being planned for the Operational Period. It is very important that tactical resource availability and other needed support be determined prior to spending a great deal of time working on strategies and tactical operations that realistically cannot be achieved.



## Preparing for the Planning Meeting

Following the Tactics Meeting, preparations are made for the Planning Meeting, to include the following actions coordinated by the Planning Section:

- Analyze the ICS 215 developed in the Tactics Meeting.
- Develop an ICS 215A, Incident Safety Analysis (prepared by the Safety Officer), based on the information in the ICS 215.
- Assess current operations effectiveness and resource efficiency.
- Gather information to support incident management decisions.

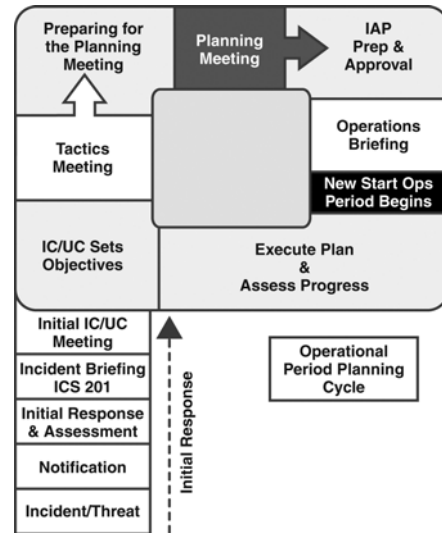


## Planning Meeting

The Planning Meeting provides the opportunity for the Command and General Staff, as well as other incident management personnel, agency officials, and cooperating/assisting agencies and organizations, to review and validate the operational plan as proposed by the Operations Section Chief. The Planning Section Chief conducts the Planning Meeting following a fixed agenda.

The Operations Section Chief delineates the amount and type of resources he or she will need to accomplish the plan. The Planning Section's "Resources Unit" will have to work with the Logistics Section to accommodate.

At the conclusion of the meeting, the Planning Section Staff will indicate when all elements of the plan and support documents are required to be submitted so the plan can be collated, duplicated, and made ready for the Operational Period Briefing.



## IAP Preparation and Approval

The next step in the Incident Action Planning Process is plan preparation and approval. The written plan is comprised of a series of standard forms and supporting documents that convey the Incident Commander's intent and the Operations Section direction for the accomplishment of the plan for that Operational Period.

For simple incidents of short duration, the Incident Action Plan (IAP) will be developed by the Incident Commander and communicated to subordinates in a verbal briefing. The planning associated with this level of complexity does not demand the formal planning meeting process as highlighted above.

Certain conditions result in the need for the Incident Commander to engage a more formal process. A written IAP should be considered whenever:

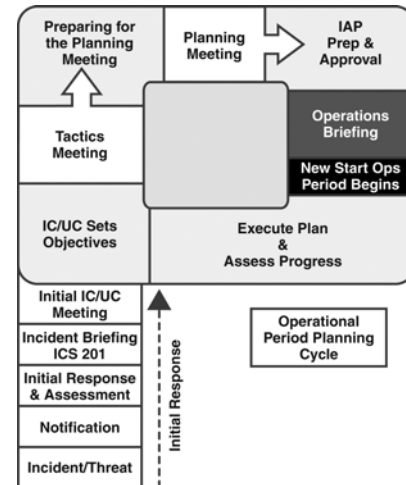
- Two or more jurisdictions are involved in the response.
- The incident continues into the next Operational Period.
- A number of ICS organizational elements are activated (typically when General Staff Sections are staffed).
- It is required by agency policy.
- A HazMat incident is involved (required).



## Operational Period Briefing

The Operational Period Briefing may be referred to as the Operations Briefing or the Shift Briefing. This briefing is conducted at the beginning of each Operational Period and presents the Incident Action Plan to supervisors of tactical resources.

Following the Operational Period Briefing supervisors will meet with their assigned resources for a detailed briefing on their respective assignments.



## Execute Plan and Assess Progress

The Operations Section directs the implementation of the plan. The supervisory personnel within the Operations Section are responsible for implementation of the plan for the specific Operational Period.

The plan is evaluated at various stages in its development and implementation. The Operations Section Chief may make the appropriate adjustments during the Operational Period to insure that the objectives are met and effectiveness is assured.

